

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Claims 1, 5, and 10 are currently being amended.

This amendment adds, changes and/or deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-10 are now pending in this application and believed to be free of the prior art. Prior to the foregoing amendments, the claims were rejected over five prior art references. These references are addressed in turn below.

JP 05-229378 (Yamamoto)

Yamamoto discloses a vehicle seat 10 that includes a seat cushion panel 20, an inflator 26 located beneath the seat cushion panel 20, and an airbag 30 that is inserted into a slit 24 of the cushion. See abstract of Yamamoto. The airbag 30 is directly connected to the inflator 26 and is not “separate from the airbag,” nor is the gas generator “connected to the airbag via a pipe.” Therefore, Yamamoto does not disclose or suggest all of the limitations recited by claims 1 and 5. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

JP 2002-79862 (Kobayashi et al.)

Kobayashi et al. discloses a vehicle seat that includes an airbag 13 and an inflator 21 that are mounted above a seat pan. See abstract of Kobayashi et al. However, as shown in Figure 3, Kobayashi et al. discloses an inflator 21 that is disposed inside of the airbag 13. Therefore, Kobayashi et al. does not disclose or suggest a gas generator that is “separate from the airbag.” Nor does Kobayashi et al. disclose or suggest a gas generator that is generator “connected to the airbag via a pipe.” Therefore, Kobayashi et al. does not disclose or suggest

all of the limitations recited by claims 1 and 5. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

JP 10-217818 (Nakano)

Nakano discloses a vehicle seat that includes an airbag 12 and an inflator 13 that are mounted above a cushion frame 3. However, as shown in Figure 4, Nakano discloses an inflator 13 that is disposed inside of the airbag 12. Therefore, Nakano does not disclose or suggest a gas generator that is “separate from the airbag.” Nor does Nakano disclose or suggest a gas generator that is generator “connected to the airbag via a pipe.” Therefore, Nakano does not disclose or suggest all of the limitations recited by claims 1 and 5.

Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

U.S. Patent No. 6,682,141 (Reynolds et al.)

Reynolds et al. disclose a seat that includes an airbag 30 that is disposed beneath a seatpan 32 so that the airbag 30 rotates the seatpan 32 upwardly about a hinge point 34 when the airbag 30 is activated. See Reynolds et al. at col. 6, lines 1-39. Reynolds et al. also discloses an embodiment where the airbag 30 inflates through an opening 58 in the seat so that the airbag 30 inflates outside of the seat, as shown in Figure 6. See Reynolds et al. at col. 6, lines 1-39. Reynolds et al. does not disclose or suggest an airbag that is mounted above a seat pan pan for pushing the seat cushion from below. Furthermore, Reynolds et al. does not disclose or suggest a gas generator that is “separate from the airbag” or “connected to the airbag via a pipe.” Therefore, Reynolds et al. does not disclose or suggest all of the limitations of claims 1 and 5. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

U.S. Pub. No. 2001/0011810 (Saiguichi et al.)

Saiguichi et al. discloses a seat that includes an airbag 320 that is arranged above a base plate 42 and an inflator 38C, 380 that is connected to the airbag 320 through an anchor 42d or side panel 420. See Saiguichi et al. at paragraphs 0172 and 0217-0218. However, the inflator 38C, 380 disclosed by Saiguichi et al. is not mounted to the base plate 42, as recited in claims 1 and 5. Saiguichi et al. discloses an inflator 38C, 380 that is mounted to the anchor

42d or side panel 420. Therefore, Saiguichi et al. does not disclose or suggest a gas generator that is mounted to the seat pan, as recited by claims 1 and 5.

Claims 3 and 4 depend from claim 1, and claims 7 and 9 depend from claim 5 and are allowable therewith, for at least the reasons set forth above, without regard to the further patentable limitations contained therein. These limitations include, for example, that "the gas generator is arranged along the upper surface of the seat pan" and that "the gas generator is arranged along the lower surface of the seat pan." As shown in Figures 23, 27, and 34, Saiguichi et al. discloses that the inflator 38C, 380 is arranged to the side of the base plate 42. Withdrawal of this rejection of claims 3, 4, 7, and 9 is respectfully requested.

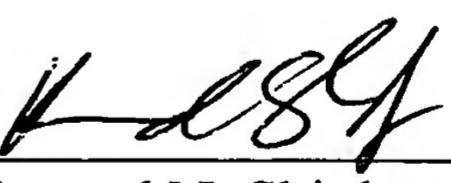
Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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By _____


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